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Arguing across spaces in an online epistemic community: case studies in controversial Wikipedia articles

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Wikipedia is the most consulted source of information on the web, on a global level. The collective writing of articles, open to the participation of all, can give rise to major conflicts between contributors, in texts and debates, given the high stakes involved in achieving agreement on a public presentation of controversial topics. We present analyses of how disagreements are managed across socio-technical and dialogical spaces in French Wikipedia, with respect to two case studies, on Freud and the Turin Shroud. We adopt a mixed methods approach, combining results of analyses of interviews with moderators in these articles and argumentative discussions underlying them, within a broadly pragma-dialectical framework. We show, on one hand, that moderators' attempts to resolve disagreements by requiring participants to cite sources simply displace conflicts to the nature of those sources, their validity, their authors and the good faith of their proponents. Debates concerning sources themselves draw on social actors' perspectives in dialogical spaces, beyond the discussion itself. Disagreements are managed rather than resolved dialectically by displacing them to alternative socio-technical spaces, such as different sections of the text itself, or participants' personal pages.

Keywords: argumentation, controversies, debates, dialogicity, online communities, socio-technical spaces, Wikipedia

1. Introduction

Since their beginnings during the 1990s, discussions on Internet forums have been important objects of research for human and social sciences. The most used forums include reddit.com and quora.com, each of which is organised into language and topic areas (such as music, sport, politics, etc.), with a particular communicative format (for example, quora is organised in a questions-answers form). Two main research directions can be distinguished relating to online communication. The first (e.g. Clark and Brennan 1991) focusses on how characteristics of the digital environments — such as anonymous typewritten communication, organisation of topics in threads, a commonly visible interaction history — influence basic aspects of cognition and interpersonal communication, social relations, politeness, dialogue memory, interactive coherence and resolution of verbal conflicts. A second research direction builds to some extent on the first, yet focusses on how virtual spaces for mass distant communication function with

respect to the realisation of important societal activities such as collaborative work, learning and e-democracy.

Online communication in large and open collectives can, of course, be a site for verbal conflict and argumentation. In that respect, Lewiński and colleagues (Lewiński 2010, 2013; Aakhus and Lewiński 2017) have argued that the study of online polylogues has much to contribute to argumentation theory, given several important phenomena that they make manifest. These authors argue that argumentation research has largely remained prisoner to a “dyadic” conception, where debates involve clear pro/contra oppositions, occurring in a determinate place, such as the law court. Online discussions and debates, however, often involve multiple and evolving sub-groups of protagonists, defending or attacking multiple viewpoints, across different digital and societal media “places”. Furthermore, it is most unlikely that the fundamental issues raised by controversies in Wikipedia — such as science *versus* religion and (so-called) pseudo-science — could actually be resolved in the article itself, in the dialectical sense of the term (Barth and Krabbe 1982), where positions are mutually recognised to be refuted or successfully defended according to commonly accepted rules. Rather, since Wikipedia articles constitute public statements available to and consulted by the whole world, what is at stake for protagonists is to ensure that their viewpoints are adequately represented as at least defensible. We therefore study the processes of “disagreement management” (Jackson 2015), and show how the multiple spaces of the Wikipedia socio-technical infrastructure, together with online community practices and rules, function with respect to such management.

The research described here extends research on the analysis of polylogal online argumentative discussions in forums, to the case of *online epistemic communities* (Détienne et al. 2012, 2016), the example under study here being Wikipedia. An online epistemic community is a community of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991; Hibbert and Rich 2006) whose *raison d’être* is the co-creation of *knowledge objects* (Hakkarainen et al. 2011), semiotic-epistemic entities that can be used to create further knowledge. Examples include open-source programming languages such as “Python” (Barcellini et al. 2008) and the online encyclopædia, Wikipedia.

Collaborative activity, including discussions, in online epistemic communities differs from online discussion forums in several respects that are relevant to understanding disagreement management within them. The analysis of their modes of functioning with respect to emergence and regulation of verbal conflicts therefore has potential for extending our understanding of polyphonic argumentation across on- and off-line spaces.

Firstly, contrary to most online discussion forums, discussions in online epistemic communities are task-oriented (Grosz and Sidner 1986), in that they are oriented towards a *shared tangible goal and output*, such as a “knowledge object” (see above). This has two main consequences, each of which influences the nature of argumentative discussions that take place in these communities: (i) conflicts can take place across two main socio-technical spaces (we shall mention other spaces later in the paper), the *discussion space*, relating to what should be written in the text, and the text *production space* itself, where conflicts often take the form of repeated text deletions and reverts; (ii) the collectively produced text is consultable by a very broad global public, which thus means that there may be much at stake for protagonists in verbal conflicts.

Secondly, Wikipedia discussions, ‘behind’ collectively written texts, take place within communities that are highly structured in terms of participant roles and rules that are supposed to be obeyed, in order to produce high quality texts. The community has administrators and also

participants who take on the role — officially or spontaneously — of moderators of conflicts and facilitators in text writing. Certain community rules aim to shape discussions in terms of their rationality — such as the “NPOV: Neutrality of Point of View” rule (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Neutral_point_of_view) — and reasonableness, precluding *ad hominem* attacks and requiring good faith (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Dispute_resolution). As we shall describe, moderators often draw on the Wikipedia rule of requiring contributors to cite (valid) sources for claims, in the belief that once this is done, conflicts will, in a sense, melt away. We show that for highly controversial articles, this is far from the case.

In sum, therefore, the Wikipedia community, involving discussions produced relating to the production of a shared object, a text, represents an important case for argumentation analysis, given the multiplicity of spaces for conflict, multiple participants, existing community rules and roles, together with the high social stakes surrounding the public and global presentation of contentious topics. The aim of this paper is therefore to understand how these specific characteristics of online epistemic communities — task-orientation, open anonymous participation, structural rules — shape the argumentative discussions that are produced within them, in terms of the processes of emergence and management (by participants, including moderators) of verbal conflicts, as they ‘migrate’ across different online, offline and ideational/dialogical spaces.

Verbal conflicts in discussion pages associated to Wikipedia pages are often very extensive, spanning a duration of several years and involving hundreds of messages (Détienne et al. 2016). In such cases, automatic analysis is often used, for example to analyse edits of texts and messages exchanged in “talk” pages. In order to retain the power and depth of qualitative analysis, over a large data set, we therefore firstly chose to analyse two case studies in the French language Wikipedia that involved extensive controversy and argumentation, on the topics “Freud” and “The Turin Shroud” (*Le suaire de Turin*). The case study approach (Yin 2009) is used here given the “how” questions we pose — relating to processes of disagreement management —, the lack of researcher control over the social situation studied, and the aim of gaining in-depth understanding of these processes. As such, therefore, the results of analyses described here can therefore not be generalised directly beyond the cases, to a larger population of articles — rather, they enable the formulation of empirically and theoretically grounded hypotheses to be tested on a broader sample.

Secondly, we used a mixed-methods approach, based on a narrative method (Baker, Détienne and Barcellini 2017), where seasoned “wikipedians”, moderators of the discussions under analysis, were asked to recount the life cycle of the article since its inception, as a means for identifying key sequences in the discussion for detailed analysis. Results of the analyses bear on the way that verbal conflicts migrate (conceptually and tangibly) and are regulated, across different spaces. As stated above, we chose to analyse the two cases analysed here (“Freud” and “The Turin Shroud”) given the fact that they included extensive verbal conflicts and attendant argumentative interactions for study. A second reason for choosing them related to methodological difficulties in finding Wikipedian moderators who agreed to be interviewed as part of the study. The two Wikipedians who accepted to participate had intervened in these two cases and agreed that they illustrated important issues for them to address as moderators.

In what follows, we firstly review research on how Wikipedia articles are produced by collective activity, focussing on the management of conflicts, across texts and discussions. We then describe our theoretical and methodological approach, anchored in methods for interaction analysis in psychology (see Bakeman and Gottman 1997), whose aim is primarily descriptive with respect to cognitive-linguistic processes. This is followed by detailed qualitative analyses of the two case studies, focussing on disagreement management across socio-technical and dialogical “spaces”. In the concluding discussion section, we firstly summarise results of analyses on disagreement management. We then close with reflexions on how our analytical results relate to primarily normative questions in argumentation studies, concerning justification of trust (Goodwin 2010) in relation to the nature of expertise and authority (Goldman 2001; Fuhrer et al. 2021; Zenker and Yu 2023), and the validity of considering both sides of certain contentious issues (Aiken and Casey 2022b).

2. Background

2.1 The Wikipedia socio-technical infrastructure

Wikipedia (henceforth, “WP”) is a freely consultable online encyclopædia, that is the most consulted textual source of information on the web¹ (excluding general search engines and video websites such as YouTube). Initiated in 2001 (by Jimmy Wales and Larry Sanger), it was inspired by the (online) “open” movement in software development and distribution (e.g. “open source” software), and the “commons-based peer production” socio-economic system (Benkler and Nissenbaum 2006). In effect, the guiding principle is egalitarian in that participation is — at least in theory — open to all who wish to contribute. WP exists in multiple languages, and in 2023 there existed almost 7 million pages in English alone; the English version and other language versions are consulted approximately 10 billion times per month across the globe.

Given its editorial policy of favouring free participation (without necessarily giving the identities and credentials of contributors), doubts have of course arisen as to the reliability of Wikipedia articles. However, independent studies (e.g. Giles 2005) have shown that science articles in Encyclopædia Britannica and WP were of comparable quality. In response to this question, there has recently been an emphasis on identifying and highlighting articles of “feature quality”². In addition to evaluating the quality of final texts produced, it could also be argued that their reliability depends on understanding the processes by which they came to be written, i.e., the extent to which the writing process involved ‘rational’ or ‘reasonable’ discussions by which differences of viewpoints were resolved or at least taken into account.

WP is organised by the Wikimedia Foundation, its president having ultimate authority. Participants may have the rights to fulfil several roles, as follows:

- *editors*, are any regular contributors to WP, whether identified by their real names (they may create personal information pages), pseudonyms or IP addresses;
- *bureaucrats* nominate or exclude administrators;
- *administrators* have the rights to block or ban (indefinitely) certain participants who do not follow the community rules (see below);

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_most_visited_websites

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:100,000_feature-quality_articles

- *arbitrators* are members of the arbitration committee, and impose binding decisions with respect to disputes.

In addition to these formal roles, certain main contributors to WP spontaneously adopt the roles of *moderators* of localised disputes (we refer to these as “Wikipedians”, interviews with two of which are analysed in the next section of this paper).

The WP community has developed its own set of *rules of conduct* (in text editing and in discussions) that participants are required to follow, known as the “five pillars”³. Apart from defining the nature of WP (e.g. it is not a dictionary, a newspaper, etc.) and the principle of free participation and consultation, the two most important pillars/rules are: (1) Neutrality of Point of View (NPOV) and (2) “Wikipedia's editors should treat each other with respect and civility”. The rules are also expressed negatively, in terms of “What Wikipedia is not”⁴, the most important aspects for our purposes here being “Wikipedia is not a soapbox or means of promotion”, “Wikipedia is not an anarchy or a forum for free speech” and “Wikipedia is not a battleground”.

The NPOV rule is of particular importance with respect to disagreement management, given its injunction towards reasonableness, fairness and rationality. In the English language WP it is presented as follows: “[a]ll encyclopedic content on Wikipedia must be written from a neutral point of view (NPOV), which means representing fairly, proportionately, and, as far as possible, without editorial bias, all the significant views that have been published by reliable sources on a topic.” It is also stated that “[a]chieving ... neutrality means carefully and critically analyzing a variety of reliable sources and then attempting to convey to the reader the information contained in them fairly, proportionately, and as far as possible without editorial bias. Wikipedia aims to describe disputes, but not engage in them.” This means that alternative or conflicting views are to be represented, but not necessarily equally (depending on their “weight” in valid sources). The notion of a “reliable source” is important here. Clearly, what counts as neutrality can and is disputed in WP. Respect or not of the NPOV rule is a major concern of moderators.

2.2 Participation and conflicts in Wikipedia

The rapid growth of WP (e.g. Kittur et al. 2007), in combination with the egalitarian principle of open participation, has led to increase in ‘editing wars’ — repeated text deletions that are then reverted to the original version. Over time, conflicts have tended to migrate from texts to discussion pages (Viégas et al. 2004; Suh et al. 2009), especially in the case of intrinsically controversial issues, concerning history, politics and sexuality⁵. Détienne et al. (2016), in the case of a page and its discussions on “Pluto”, showed that conflicts turned crucially on images of participants’ competences. In a sense, participants are constrained to try to resolve conflicts within a particular page and its attendant discussion pages, given the “no forking rule”, i.e. it is forbidden to create other alternative pages on a given topic and title.

Several strategies for conflict resolution are in fact built into the WP infrastructure. Firstly, repeated text reverts are automatically controlled by “bots”, applying a “no three reverts” rule, whose infraction leads to text editing being blocked. Secondly, participants can appeal to the Arbitration Committee, in the case of particularly prolonged verbal and textual conflicts, that may lead to blocking or banning of participants. Thirdly, articles that are characterised by major

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Five_pillars

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:What_Wikipedia_is_not

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:List_of_controversial_issues

unresolved disputes may be blocked from further editing, with a pink banner being shown at the head of the page, “This article is subject to a conflict of neutrality”. Finally, disputes on neutrality or on balance of viewpoints are managed by moderators, who strive to make participants conform to the Five Pillar rules. As we shall see below, these features of the WP infrastructure do not, however, prevent the incidence of prolonged verbal conflicts, that do not respect the Five Pillars.

Given that all successive text edits and discussions are automatically stored on WP, and are freely available, this has facilitated and stimulated research on the automatic analysis of conflicts, in texts, discussions or both. Using natural language processing techniques, Jhandir et al. (2017) detected Wikipedia controversies on the basis of differences in semantic meanings introduced in the edits, within successive revisions over time by various authors. They used a semantic difference measuring scheme to evaluate the edits’ dissimilarity as well as the affinities amongst conflicts and the articles’ topics. Both Yasseri et al. (2012; 2014) and Borra et al. (2015) (see also Gandica et al. 2014) developed algorithms that were able to distinguish “vandalism” in text edits (often carried out by anonymous participants, identified by IP addresses) from “substantive conflicts”, the latter being carried out by participants having a large number of edits. The former authors also showed that controversial issues differ significantly across language versions of WP (e.g. soccer-related issues are massively controversial in the Spanish WP but not elsewhere), whilst there are nevertheless “flashpoints common to all languages and cultures, in particular religious and political topics” (Yasseri et al. 2012, p.11). Their work substantiates three further general claims about the nature of conflicts in WP:

1. “[d]ebates rarely conclude on the basis of merit: typically, they are ended by outside intervention, sheer exhaustion, or the evident numerical dominance of one group.” (ibid., p. 11);
2. a large proportion of edit wars are caused by a small number of “fighting pairs” (see our analysis of “Freud” in §4 of the present paper);
3. in conflicts characterized by large numbers of editors in conflicting groups, “a steady flow of replacement armies keeps the article always far from equilibrium.” (see our analysis of “The Turin Shroud”, below).

In addition to automatic analyses of conflicts in texts, there is also a small literature on the automatic analysis of conflicts in WP discussions, the aim of which is to automatically identify conflictual discussions and threads within them. Denis et al. (2012) aimed to identifying conflictual WP discussion threads using two surface indicators, within a general formal dialectics (Barth and Krabbe 1982) approach: polarity of written utterances, and alternation of marks of subjectivity (“I”, “you”, “we”, “my”, “your”, “our”). They showed that this approach produced superior results to a semantic-lexical analysis, and that conflictuality was directly proportional to thread length: threads are prolonged because of conflicts within them. Following this structural approach, Ziembowicz et al. (2022) found that identifying dyadic turn-taking patterns was a good predictor of conflict-prone discussion in Wikipedia. Ho-Dac et al. (2016) argued that the most efficient method for automatically identifying conflictual discussions (rather than threads) was a lexical rather than a syntactic approach. Their method was based principally on frequency of discourse connectives, politeness cues, marks of (dis)agreement and general quantitative characteristics, such as number of threads, number of different contributors and proportion of anonymous posts.

In summary, although the WP infrastructure includes several approaches to managing disagreements, this does not prevent extended conflictual discussions from occurring, on

controversial political, religious and societal issues. Significant advances have been made in automatic identification of conflicts in WP, notably relating to participation structures. As yet, there is little research that deals with the detailed qualitative sequential analysis of disagreement management in WP.

3. Theoretical-methodological approach

Wikipedia articles, and the discussions associated with them, often extend over several years. For example, Figure 1 below shows the French Wikipedia page for “Le suaire de Turin” on the left, and the associated discussion page on the right. The latter shows archived discussions structured hierarchically (replies to replies) using nested boxes.

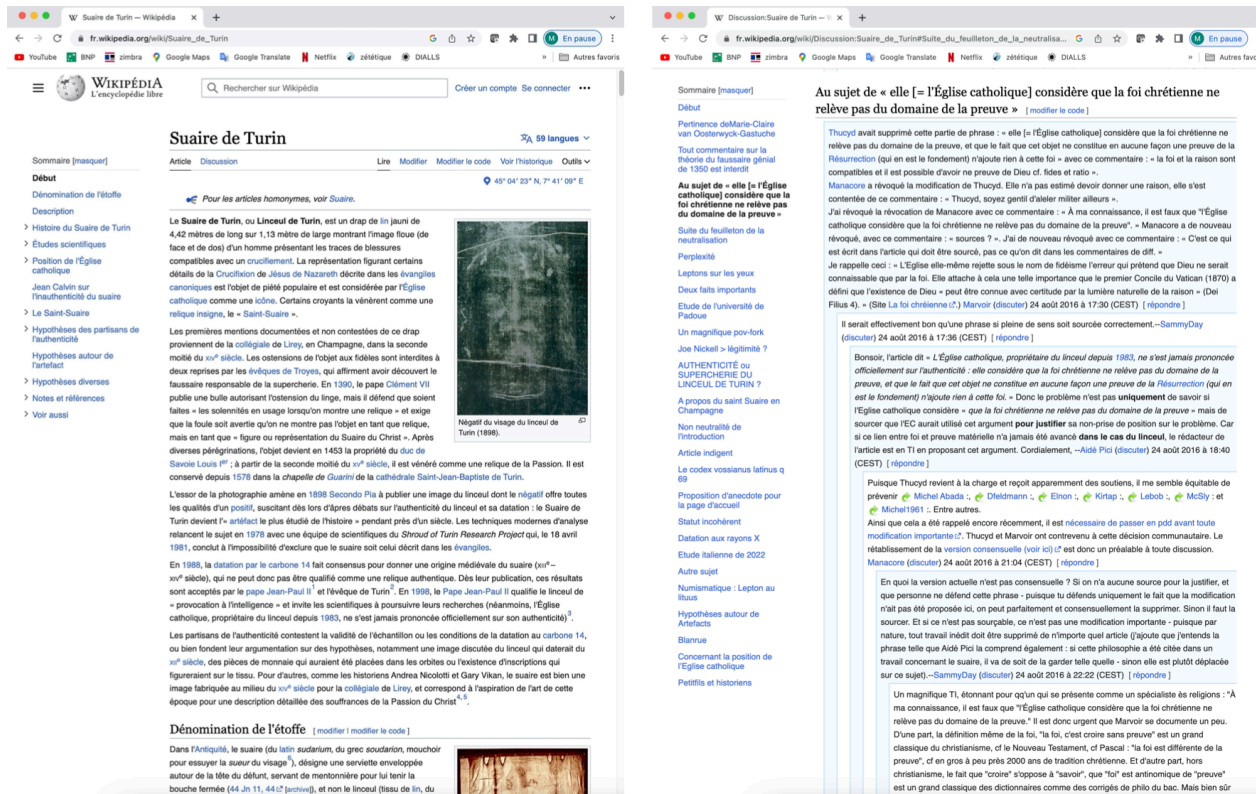


Figure 1. Wikipedia pages for the French article “Le Suaire de Turin” (The Turin Shroud), text on left and discussion on the right.

Given such a high volume of data, we used a *mixed methods* approach (Hmelo-Silver 2003), combining analysis of the texts and discussions with narratives on those discussions, produced by certain participants (moderators) who were major contributors to the articles in question. This has the additional advantage of enabling identification of aspects of disagreement management that are not directly visible in the specific texts and associated discussions, such as the migration of a conflict from the text discussion pages to the conflicting participants’ personal pages (see below). We thus aim to produce a “thick description” (Geertz 1973) of the conflictual

discussions, combining first person (that of WP moderators) and third person (researcher) perspectives.

We identified and contacted major contributors in the French WP, asking them to identify controversial articles in which they had played a moderator role. It is important to note that such a “moderator” role is not officially institutionalised (i.e. in the form of an “administrator” status): as our analyses mentioned above showed, certain major contributors cooperate in regulating or moderating activity in Wikipedia, apparently motivated by genuine concern for quality work to be achieved. Usually, these persons intervene across several articles. These Wikipedians were interviewed, face-to-face, with the articles and their discussion pages available on the computer. They were asked to produce a narrative of the evolution of the articles from their inception to the present day, with little intervention (other than prompting to continue) from the researcher.

The task instructions read to the Wikipedians by the researcher were as follows:

“Imagine that I am a person who would like to contribute to this Wikipedia article. Could you tell me what I would need to know in order to be able to participate? To do so, you are free to look in the history of the article (edition and talks pages) and to refer to it in your narration. You have as much time as you feel necessary.”

In this article, we focus on the analysis of two interviews, with two expert Wikipedians who narrate the evolution of the articles entitled “The Turin Shroud” (*Le Suaire de Turin*, in French) and “Sigmund Freud”, with their underlying discussions.

The interviews were video recorded and transcribed for analysis (the original French is translated here by the authors).

For readability and facilitation of analysis, the WP discussion pages’ hierarchical representation of boxes in boxes (see right hand part of Figure 1) were transcribed into linear yet indented threads. We established concordances between the transcribed interviews and the discussion pages of the related article. This was achieved by drawing on: (1) explicit references to parts of the discussion, what was actually said and the organization of the discussion by topics (for example, “Freud et l’antisémitisme” – Freud and antisemitism); (2) references to specific participants in the discussion.

Table 1 shows an example of a specific concordance between an interview with the Wikipedian who called himself “Prosopée” (on the Sigmund Freud Wikipedia pages) and the discussion pages to which it refers.

Table 1. Concordance between narration and references to the WP article and discussion.

<i>Wikipedian moderator</i>	<i>Transcription of interview with Wikipedian moderator</i>	<i>Reference to section of Wikipedia article</i>	<i>Discussion thread relating to the article section</i>
Prosopée	Let’s look at the interaction trace. (...). I remember very well now. There was a section called “Freud and antisemitism”, which is a bit the Gordian knot of the article, we’ll see now in the discussion page	Freud and antisemitism	Karl Kraus “virulent antisemite”??

3.2 From first to third person perspectives: spaces of collective activity

In their analyses of the contemporary oil shale fracking debate in the USA, Aakhus and Lewiński (2017) use the term “place” to refer to where the debate takes place — in a small meeting room, within a newspaper, on tv, etc. Despite the appropriate Aristotelian connotation of the term “place” (the *topos*, or *locus*), we prefer the term “space” in the present research, for several reasons. Firstly, in the sense described by Jackson (2015), the Wikipedia online community corresponds to a socio-technical *infrastructure*, for collective text production and discussions, with its own rules and practices designed to ensure balanced texts on the basis of ‘reasonable’ discussions. In previous research on such communities (e.g. Baker, Détienne and Barcellini 2017), the diverse tools provided for different functions, such as text production, discussion and arbitration, have been referred to as “spaces”, by analogy with technological “(work-)spaces”. Secondly, in argumentation studies of task-oriented dialogues, the concept of a “space of debate” has been elaborated, to encapsulate persons’ understanding of the questions, theses, (counter-)arguments and concepts underlying the debate (Baker et al. 2002). Finally, we understand the term “space” not only in tangible socio-technical terms (e.g. an online tool for text writing), but also in ideational and dialogical terms (Bakhtine 1929/1977). Thus, within a given socio-technical space, such as a discussion forum, debate may proceed by opening dialogical spaces relating to the validity of citing certain sources, with respect to the “voices” of social actors (such as writers of books, politicians), ‘through which’ arguments are expressed.

We analyse both the Wikipedian moderators’ narratives on the life-cycle of the article and its related discussion, as well as the discussion itself, according to the following four spaces:

1. The *socio-technical spaces* in which debate takes place, are defined by the Wikipedia online epistemic community, its rules, participants and artifacts. Such spaces include:

- The text production space
- The discussion space
- Project spaces (e.g. the Freud article is part of a more general “psychology” project)
- Individual participants’ spaces (pages and discussion spaces)

2. The *dialectical space* is broadly defined by pragma-dialectical theory (Barth and Krabbe, 1982; van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 1984), extended to take into consideration interpersonal relations (see below) and inter-discursive operations, whereby participants transform the meanings of argumentative moves (Baker 2015). We draw here on elements of these argumentation models only as descriptive categories, without taking into account normative elements, i.e. the “code of conduct” (van Eemeren, Grootendorst and Snoeck Henkemans 1996, p. 274) for how argumentative discussions *should* be conducted, reasonably. It is furthermore not clear how debates on the co-production of Wikipedia articles, as epistemic objects, would be taken into account within the (legal, political, diplomatic and interpersonal) argumentative communicative activity types described by van Eemeren (2018, pp. 131-136), in order to attend to the specificities of argumentation in the context of the co-elaboration of knowledge. The descriptive categories we drawn on include:

- Theses/general standpoints that are debated
- The nature of disagreements (“conflicts of avowed opinion”, Barth and Krabbe, *ibid.*).
- Dialectical roles (proponent, opponent, neutral or third-party moderator)

- The participants/protagonists, any number of which may assume dialectical roles, including third party moderators
- The nature of the argumentative moves expressed
- The ways in which disagreements were managed (verbal conflicts resolved or ‘dissolved’).

3. The *dialogical space* concerns the “voices” through which interventions are expressed (Bakhtine, 1929/1977), of virtual participants, not actually present in the online debate. Thus, for example, a verbal conflict on specific sources in the Freud article is expressed using the voice of the write Élisabeth Roudinesco, a well-known Freudian in France, who did not participate in the Wikipedia discussion.

4. The *interpersonal space* concerns the images projected by locutors of their interlocutors (as more or less competence, sincere, polite) and the interactive regulation of affects (Baker, Andriessen and Järvelä 2013).

Fundamentally, our analyses highlight how dialectics, dialogism and interpersonal relations are anchored in and transit between socio-technical spaces.

4. Analyses

We present analyses of discussions and collective text writing for two controversial articles in the French language Wikipédia: Freud, and The Turin Shroud. In each case, we begin from the Wikipedia moderators’ interview statements, going back and forth to elements of the discussion to which they refer, to complete and verify the moderator’s narrative, characterising the discussion in terms of the spaces described above.

4.1 Freud

The Wikipedian moderator nicknamed “Prosopée” that we interviewed stated that he was generally motivated to fulfil this unofficial role by his general interest in psychology, and by the fact that the article on Sigmund Freud was too important to be left in an unacceptable state. In addition, he had decided to present the article to a “wiki-competition” for “feature-quality articles”.

He presented the main characteristics of the *dialectical space* — the protagonists and the verbal conflict — as essentially a conflict “for or against Freud”:

Prosopée: “[There was] an editing war between two editors uh, so, who came from two conflicting ideologies Cerhab ... was someone who was from... the cognitivist field, so let's say hard science. ... Someone who refused, for example, the postulate of the unconscious, quite simply. And someone who was more ... psychoanalytical, ... clearly oriented towards Freud, who was uh, Léon66. These two people were fighting to such an extent that... we couldn't add anything more to the article, because they went behind it and, uh, they destroyed the added text...

We have the psychoanalyst who defends Freud, and we have Cerhab who defends the thesis that Freud is a charlatan. In the end, that's it.”

The conflicting pair, Cerhab and Léon66 worked mostly on the sections of the text entitled “Freud and antisemitism” and “Freud and cocaine”. A Wikipedia community rule entered into play here, in that the two sections had become disproportionately large. It is important to note that the conflict of ideas began in the *socio-technical space* of article production — repeated text deletion that was then reverted to the original — and gravitated towards the discussion space.

Turning to analysis of the online debate itself, two main discussion threads illustrate the main theses and verbal conflicts concerning what Prosopée saw as a critique and defense of the scientificity of Freud's theory and of Freud as a person.

The first is thread number 58 (see Appendix 1), entitled "Analysing Freud's theories in the light of recent scientific discoveries is quite simply nonsense!", and opens with the following exchange between Léon66 ("Freudian") and Cerhab ("scientist"):

- Léon66: Analysing Freud's theories in the light of recent scientific discoveries is quite simply nonsense!
Cerhab: and what about this? - "In neuroscience, there are researchers who attempt to reconcile neuroscience and Freudian theories [F 15]", what's that? Your partiality will be your downfall!

From this statement and counter-example we can already see the type of *interpersonal space* created between this conflicting pair, from the accusations of "nonsense!" and "partiality".

The third-party moderator intervenes, essentially to point out that the actual *resolution* of disputes is not the province of Wikipedia, which should simply present their existence, and to use his most frequent moderation strategy of requiring participants to give precise citations of sources:

- Prosopée: Hello, whether it is true or false, in itself, does not interest me, on the other hand I want sources. ... Gentlemen, in view of the long polemics above, I recommend that you go via the discussion page systematically when you want to add a point. We will discuss it each time, on the other hand, provide yourself with precise sources (paginations), thank you. ...

Although the general verbal conflict here concerns the scientificity of Freud's theory, in fact this is very little debated in the discussion in a *direct* sense. The second main thread where verbal conflict is intense is number 50 – see Appendix 2), entitled "Élisabeth Roudinesco", a well-known university researcher, author, historian and psychoanalyst, who is often present in the media in France. The argumentative processes at work in this thread need to be understood with respect to *dialogical spaces*, involving disputes about the legitimacy (as Wikipedia article cited sources) of publications and media statements by Roudinesco and her main dialogical opponent, as presented in the discussion, J. Bénesteau, a clinical psychologist at the Université de Toulouse.

The thread is opened by Léon66, who disputes the acceptability of the book "Mensonges Freudiens" (*Freudian Lies*), by Bénesteau, as a valid source to be cited. Léon66 bases his argument by evoking the voice of Roudinesco, who an article in the journal *Les Temps Modernes* entitled *Le Club de l'Horloge et la psychanalyse : chronique d'un antisémitisme masqué* (The Club de l'Horloge and psychoanalysis: chronicle of masked anti-Semitism). The *Club de l'Horloge* — an extreme right-wing organisation — had strongly recommended Bénesteau's book. Léon66 states that Roudinesco was "the only person to have had the courage to attack that 'book' [in scare-quotes] and to reveal its character and foundations". The court case brought against Roudinesco for slander, by The Club de l'Horloge and Bénesteau, was unsuccessful. Léon66's argument against citing Bénesteau's book works, therefore, essentially on the planes of rationality and ethics: the book is irrational, in that it is based on an anti-semitic perspective.

In the same message, Léon66 pursues with a personal attack on Cerhab:

- Léon66: "Those who set themselves up as vigilantes on wiki would do well to think about it! When Freud is called a liar, a swindler, greedy for money, etc. we peddle images of sad memory. GL from the top of your

greatness, think about it! Cerhab, given your verve, you will no doubt find other causes to defend or other means to quench your anti-Freudian thirst. Less ambiguous means."

Cerhab's rejoinder turns firstly on calling into question Roudinesco for not having read the book she criticises (accusation of incompetence), and from benefiting from "inept media complacency":

Cerhab: "The only one [Roudinesco] who, although she clearly did not read the incriminated book by Bénesteau, used an unfortunate combination of circumstances to lynch this author, benefiting moreover from inept media complacency, and from assassins with fallacious and dubious arguments ...who could one of these days be attacked by the law courts!"

Secondly, Cerhab calls into question Léon66's critique of Bénesteau's critique of Freud as antisemitic:

"On what grounds, other than a trial based on attributing false intentions, does Leon66 rely to affirm peremptorily but gratuitously that the portrait of Freud, documented and sourced, constitutes an antisemitic attack and not an illustration of the singular psychology of the character!? Be more serious!"

Thirdly, Cerhab summarises his reasons for contesting psychoanalysis, positioning himself on a "scientific" standpoint, in opposition to "mediatised psychoanalysts" (he refers to Roudinesco, in particular) who have an outdated morality:

Cerhab: "For my part, I contest psychoanalysis for methodological, scientific (my field being in particular cognitive sciences) and political reasons when our media psychoanalysts champion misogyny, homophobia (which, I admit, is not the case of Roudinesco even if she defends, for example, Lacan who was explicitly [homophobic]).....and of a backward-looking morality!"

This is therefore "tit-for-tat", on an ethical level: if Bénesteau is morally unacceptable as an antisemite, Roudinesco is also morally unacceptable since she defends someone (Lacan) who was homophobic.

A moderator, "Ouicoude" then intervenes, reminding Cerhab of Wikipedia rules:

Ouicoude: "Very clearly, it is not up to any of us to decide whether or not Bénesteau's remarks are antisemitic, nor his analysis of Freud. On the other hand, if authors have said and published it, nothing prevents us from saying "X saw antisemitic remarks there" (source). Otherwise, we must refrain from this kind of insinuation. And why not a page on Bénesteau, which would give Freud a holiday?"

The last reference to a possible Wikipedia page on Bénesteau illustrates a possible conflict management strategy, i.e. shift the conflict to a different *sociotechnical space*.

Cerhab replies that that is a possibility, and goes on to defend Bénesteau's book as a valid source, given that: 1) he has read the book *in extenso* and refutes the claim that it is antisemitic (Freud was Jewish) and claims, further, that even if it was antisemitic, that is no valid reason for refusing to cite it, especially since [his own capitals]:

Cerhab: "Benesteau's book received: THE PRIZE OF THE FRENCH SOCIETY FOR THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE IN 2003 (the said society had awarded the same prize to Roudinesco before!!!)... do you suppose that this institution is antisemitic, anti -Freudian or I don't know what?"

So, for Cerhab, the champion of science, ethical unacceptability of a text, if proven, is no reason for suppressing the "scientific truth". Moreover, he claims, if Bénesteau's book was in fact antisemitic, it is not plausible that a French academic society would have given it a prize.

The rest of the thread is principally devoted to personal attacks between Cerhab and Léon66, for example:

Léon66: You I saw you coming. A lonely inactive person who found a reason to exist in an anti-Freudian sport. In general, it calms down, a piece of advice young man, first read well what you are talking about and come back and tell us everything... afterwards! Good reading!

Cerhab: I will not respond to these grotesque deductions (between projection and "wishful thinking") witnessing a deep and tenacious resentment, a dismaying lack of culture and distressing bad faith!

To summarise this discussion thread, in terms of the dimensions described above (§3), on a first level we see here in epistemic terms, that what is at stake (and is partially made explicit) is an opposition between what might be termed "modern empirical science" (Cerhab), including neuroscience and cognitive science, and Freudian psychoanalysis (Léon66). However, the dispute is not expressed primarily in these terms, but rather in an indirect manner, via a disagreement concerning the acceptability of citing particular sources (Bénesteau's "Freudian Lies" book) in a section of the Wikipedia text devoted to "Critiques". This proceeds by opening up a *dialogical space* in which the 'voices' of critics of the book (E. Roudinesco) and its defenders (Le Club de l'Horloge) are expressed.

In terms of the **dialectical space**, functioning within the dialogical space, the main standpoints, protagonists and (counter-)arguments are summarized in Figure 2.

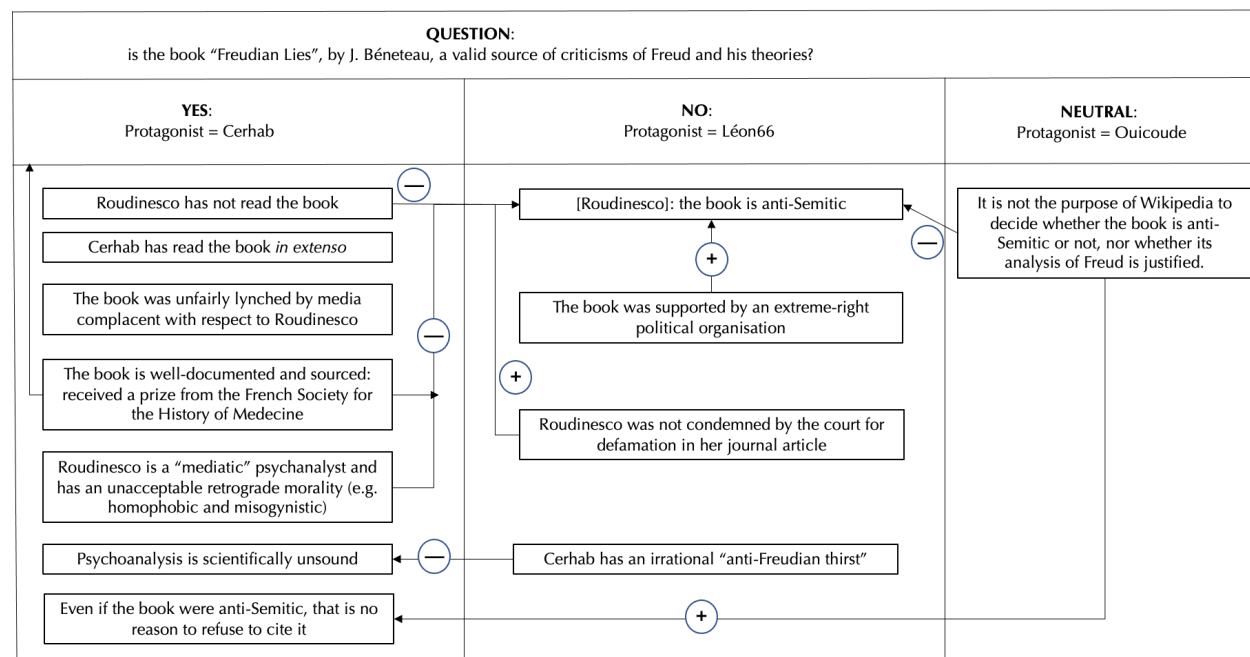


Figure 2. Summary of the dialectical space for the thread "Elisabeth Roudinesco"

In terms of dialectical rules, the outcome here is undecided: the arguments against the book produced by Léon66 have all been counter-argued by Cerhab, towards which Léon66 has no reply. However, there is a double question here: 1) is Bénéteau's book antisemitic?, 2) if it was, does that imply that the book is not a valid source? We are at the heart, here, of the questions of the relations between aesthetics, ethics and science. The first question is undecided, but the second question is answered by the spontaneous moderator Ouicoude: the putative antisemitic character of the book is not a relevant question with respect to the Wikipedia community.

This is perhaps one of the reasons why the discussion moves towards what is perhaps the most salient dimension here, the *interpersonal space*, where Cerhab and Léon66 project images of each other as irrational, lacking knowledge and culture, exchanging ironic insults, as described above.

Finally, the verbal conflict was managed by its transfer to another *socio-technical space*, the personal pages of Cerhab. According to the moderator Prosopée:

Prosopée: The funny thing is that the... the editing war moved from the discussion pages, from Freud's talk page... to their own talk pages. Afterwards, they fought through their pages. For what? Because they couldn't get to Freud's talk page anymore, since uh, they knew that every time I was going to be there to ask them for sources.

Interviewer: So it was the work of mediation that forced them to move.

Prosopée: Yeah, absolutely

The following extracts from the beginning and the end of the discussion on Cerhab's personal pages, from a thread title "Mon pauvre vieux" (Poor old guy), shows the interpersonal nature of the conflict with Léon66, where each insults the other, calling into question their

respective competences, taking the high ground by advising the other to read texts of philosophers of science, rather than talking rubbish:

Léon66: You have a vision of science worthy of positivism. With that we are going to get very far, so read Koyré rather than saying just anything.

Cerhab: Do not use references whose contents you do not know. And, allow me to advise you, in return, to read Gilles Gaston-Granger, Jean Petitot and Jean Cavaillès. I'm making an effort not to give you an earful with Popper. Moreover, to understand what Science is, it is better to practice it a little because erudition is not science.

4.2 The Turin shroud

We interviewed the Wikipedian moderator nicknamed Turb, with respect to the article in French language Wikipédia, entitled “Le Suaire de Turin” (The Turin shroud). According to the French Wikipédia article (here translated into English),

“The Turin Shroud is a yellowed linen sheet 4.42 metres long by 1.13 metres wide showing the blurred image (front and back) of a man showing the traces of wounds consistent with crucifixion. The representation depicting certain details of the Crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth described in the canonical gospels is the object of popular piety and is considered by the Catholic Church as an icon. Some believers venerate it as a badge relic, the “Holy Shroud””

Turb summarised the *dialectical space* of the discussion as a science *versus* religion conflict:

Turb: “... the article on the shroud of Turin is interesting first because ... it has a very long history ... that it is a subject in essence, uh ... which is controversial in essence. That is to say that ... science and religion collide, you might say.”

At the time of the interview, the article was classified as suffering from a neutrality controversy. A second problem with the article, according to Turb, was that it was imbalanced, in terms of space given to scientific theories and to numerous “alternative theories”.

Beyond the science/religion general conflict, in the Wikipedia discussion the specific conflict of opinions turned firstly on the question of the authenticity of the shroud. Secondly, it turned on the question of the validity of the carbon-14 dating analysis, that was carried out on a sample of the shroud in 1988, the results of which showed that it dated from between 1260 and 1390 CE, a result which would obviously, if accepted, strongly argue against the shroud’s authenticity. So far, emerging argumentative questions were:

Q1: is the Turin shroud authentic (as the cloth that covered the body of Jesus of Nazareth) or not?

Q2: Is the carbon-14 dating of the shroud valid or not?

According to Turb, the “religious people” produced two main counter-active defenses for authenticity, countering the carbon-14 dating counter-argument:

Turb: “there’re two contestations in fact. The first is that there are people who say that the cloth was patched up in the Middle Ages, so they did the carbon 14 analysis on the wrong bit of cloth. The second errr is that ... errr ... the carbon 14 analysis has a margin of error, in fact. Which means to say that there’s a margin of error that’s made explicit, explained. Errr... so the contestation is to say, well, there you are, there are sometimes margins of error, so we find ourselves in the margin of error, so it’s not valid.”

The main arguments against the negative thesis relating to Q2 above (i.e. the carbon 14 dating is valid) were therefore:

CA1: The shroud was repaired in the Middle Ages, so the carbon-14 analysis could have been carried out on cloth samples from that repair.

CA2: Carbon-14 dating has error margins, so the result does not disprove a date before 1260 CE⁶.

The participation structure of the *Suaire de Turin* discussion is quite different from that of the Freud discussion, presented above, that was dominated by a conflicting pair. As Turb explains, the *Suaire de Turin* discussion was characterised by a “mass effect”, where whole groups of participants on the “religious side” joined in the text production process, to occupy a maximum of space with their own view and to ‘swamp out’ that of their opponents, countered by a mass effect of seasoned Wikipedians, leading to an unbalanced text:

Turb: “There was a mass effect. There was the “official” theory, with Carbon 14, which established that it dated from the Middle Ages, and there were pages and pages and pages for demonstrating that the Carbon 14 analysis was fallacious... with people with PhDs having done studies to contest Carbon 14 analysis... so it is very difficult to find a good way err which space to leave for the “official” theory and for “alternative” theories”.

Turb: “There’s a mass effect that works out here. It’s above all experienced Wikipedians who intervene in an article to try to ... to hold back people who want to contest the Carbon 14 analysis. But those who contest that analysis are very numerous and very fierce.”

The main participant who played a moderator role, Turb, tried various strategies to resolve the conflicts and improve the balance of the article:

- He proposed, as a *compromise* solution, the text “the majority of scientists think that it dates from the Middle Ages”. This was not accepted, since, as Turb states, “it wasn’t necessarily appropriate, since there isn’t anywhere a study that says ‘the majority of scientists think that’ ...”.
- He also used the common strategy of Wikipedia moderators of requiring participants to cite sources.

In fact, the majority of the discussion did not *directly* address the general questions of authenticity of the shroud and validity of the carbon-14 tests, but — as with the Freud discussions — concerned the acceptability of *sources*, in a *dialogical space*. Most of the sources under dispute could be categorised as originating in “alternative theories”. As Turb states this:

Turb: “... a lot of people intervened on this article who ... called into question the studies and the personality of the scientists in question, so the debate was displaced. ... for example, there’s a discussion “who are the partisans of the shroud?” that tried to show that all the scientists or all the people who wrote articles on the subject were, errr, Christians ... fundamentalists, or close to fundamentalist Christians, and so they were necessarily, errr, or rather that, in that case, it had no meaning ... there was no point in speaking of them in the article. ... on the publishers ... some are more esoteric than others. They can be scientists, who publish in journals with peer review. But, errr, not necessarily the most well-known journals, they can be confidential

⁶ The Turin Shroud Wikipedia article cites a recent analysis (2020) of the data gathered in 1988, that concludes that the dating may have to be adjusted by 88 years in order to meet the requirements of 95% confidence. This could not move the dating back by more than a thousand years to the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth.

journals. There's a lot of discussion about the boards of reviewers, and so on. Yeah, you have someone with a PhD in history who talks about the subject, BUT he's not competent about carbon 14, and inversely."

Turb also provides an interesting summary of how the debate concerning sources proceeds:

Turb: "... the first stage is ... err ... the article: we discuss the article. The second is, we'll discuss the sources. The third is, we'll discuss .. the ... good faith, sincerity or the relevance of the author of the sources. The last stage is: we'll discuss the good faith ... errr ... the desire of the participant to participate or contribute with serenity".

In other terms, the object of the debate *migrates*, as follows: *article content* (Is the shroud authentic?) → *sources* (validity, e.g. reputable scientific publications?) → *authors* of sources (genuine experts relevant to the domain?) → *participants* in Wikipedia discussion (sincerity, good faith?).

The main elements of the dialectical space are summarised in Figure 3.

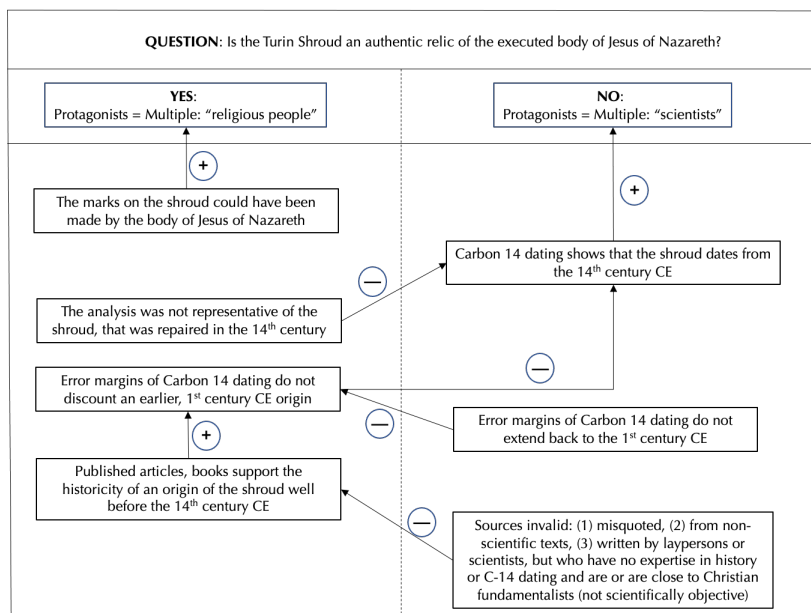


Figure 3. Summary of the dialectical space for the discussion on the Wikipédia page "Le Suaire de Turin"

The discussion in the thread "Who are the partisans of the shroud?" (see Appendix 3), referred to by Turb (see above), illustrates some of the points mentioned above, concerning disputes on sources and their migrations.

The thread is opened by Michel1961 who proposes to create a paragraph in the Wikipedia text devoted to the question "Who are the partisans of the shroud?", including within that category both the writers of pro-shroud books and the discussion participants who propose them as legitimate sources to be cited. Michel1961 discredits those partisans as Christian fundamentalists and adherents of conspiracy theories:

Michel1961: either they are people closely linked to the extreme right and/or Christian Protestant or Catholic fundamentalists, fighting against, I quote "a Masonic Judeo plot" or dreamers! ... the same supporters are looking for other "Masonic Judeo plots". "September 11, 2001" is a dream subject. also these same supporters have created new associations whose credo is "why were 5 Israelis questioned then released within the framework of the investigations on September 11? " edifying isn't it?

Topio intervenes to claim that Michel1961 makes a "detestable" amalgam between "the scientists leaving the door open to a very ancient origin of the Shroud", conspiracy theorists and anti-Semites. Dauphiné intervenes to invalidate Michel1961's proposals, claiming that "the partisans of the shroud" is not a homogeneous category of people:

Dauphiné: Michel1961, be careful what you write ... they are millions of Catholics scattered throughout the world, of all political opinions, including their share of believers by principle, believers by obedience, believers by naivety, believers convinced by the arguments they have read, believers out of habit, etc. To say that it was mostly fundamentalists who fell back on the conspiracy theory about 9/11 is caricatural and unfounded (has a statistical link been established by opinion poll?).

Addacat now intervenes to turn the statements of the Catholic Church against Dauphiné's statements: the church never intervenes in "authenticist brochures" and has never contradicted the carbon 14 dating scientific results. He is then supported by Michel1961 who, in reply to Dauphiné, states that he had no intention of stigmatising millions of Catholics, only those who write "authenticist documents" who are all, according to his google search all members of extremist movements. He is supported in turn by Addacat, who arrives at the same conclusions: the authenticity of the shroud is supported neither by the Catholic Church nor by accredited historians.

The response of Dauphiné is interesting, in that it evokes a problem of neutrality of viewpoint: if there is a paragraph in the text on *pro*-shroud people (militant Catholics, fundamentalists), there should also be a paragraph on *contra*-shroud people, who could also be accused of militant anti-clericalism. Dauphiné proposes that:

Dauphiné: These two sections could also be placed side by side to show that the debate can certainly be treated in a scientific way, but that it also has a heavy ideological dimension.

Michel1961 replies by accepting Dauphiné's proposal. He says that it is interesting to remark that the scientific community of C14 dating has evolved: first of all, *pro*-authenticity, since if the shroud had been authentic, they would have gained an enormous amount of publicity; but:

Michel1961: then they became especially "anti-authentic" tired of being treated as incompetent and then quickly as cheaters in the pay of "the great world conspiracy" and this often by distorting their words and their writings in a crude way.

The thread is closed by Rocla, who discusses the following sentence that has just been added to the introduction: "For some Catholics, the sheet is a relic, the Holy Shroud, the shroud that covered Jesus of Nazareth when he was buried: his image had been miraculously printed on the fibres. For the majority of them, it is a medieval forgery or the work of an artist made for devotional purposes or deception." Rocla objects that there is no evidence for "the majority" of

Catholics believing the shroud is inauthentic. He states that, moreover, people who are in favour of authenticity are not only Catholics:

Rocla: in France, the most famous personality who took sides in favour of the authenticity of the shroud is an agnostic: Didier van Cauwelaert; André Marion is also an agnostic, etc. Furthermore, so that wiki is not Franco-centric, it must be added that Barrie Schwartz, Adler, Danin, Baruch, scientists clearly in favour of authenticity, are Jews, and that there are of course a large number of Protestants who follow the same line.

Finally, Rocla disputes that the image was “miraculously” printed on the fibre, citing Rogers who explains this mostly by natural laws.

To summarise the argumentation of this thread, it begins from a claim that the “partisans” of the shroud are exactly that: partisans, in the sense of fundamentalist religious people, who are also conspiracy theorists. The anti-authenticity view is also supported (Addacat) by the claim that (even) the official Catholic church does not explicitly support the authenticity view. Neither do genuine historians support it. The defensive move introduced by Dauphiné is interesting: if the pro-authenticity people are irrational, ideological, then so are the anti-authenticity people (e.g. anticlericalists); both sides should be represented. A further critique of Michel1961’s critique of the authors of sources produced in favour of authenticity is produced by Rocla: it is not true to say that all defenders of the shroud’s authenticity are (extremist) Catholics, since there are also agnostic, Jewish and protestant defenders.

It is interesting to remark that with respect to the *interpersonal space*, this key thread proceeds in a mostly civil, polite and concessive manner (cf. Khazraie and Talebzadeh 2020). A possible explanation relates to the nature of the argumentative situation, which here mostly concerns successively refined *definitions* (of the group termed “the partisans of the shroud”). According to the work of Muntig and Turnbull (1998), this is not a form of argument that is experienced by people as particularly aggressive, in comparison with, for example, irrelevancy claims.

This is certainly not the case in other threads of the discussion, such as the thread entitled “ad hominem attack”, that concerns the validity of sources such as books written by Sue Benford (a nurse) and Joe Marino (an ex-Catholic priest). The thread even includes an example of “Godwin’s law”, an Internet adage which says that as a discussion grows longer, the probability increases of a comparison being made to Nazis or Hitler:

Gustave G: It's an old trick to cry out an ad hominem attack when you have no more arguments. Yes or no, do former nurse Sue Benford and former priest Joe Marino have sufficient scientific training and are they recognized specialists in academia? If this is not the case we do not even have to quote on Wikipedia the books where they refute what the academic authorities say.

Lebob: And too bad for the Godwin law that will not fail to be attributed to me, it is exactly the same as Robert Faurisson writing "history books" on the Holocaust. These people simply do not have the background and the techniques necessary to be able to judge with full knowledge of the facts.

Meschinot: Effectively. A magnificent Godwin law to Lebob for his magnificent amalgamation. (...) you do not have the right to replace an editorial committee which has appointed one or more referee(s). (...) Furthermore, I would remind you, since you seem to be forgetting it at this moment, that science focuses on the quality of the article and not on the quality of the author.

Addacat: That's good, you are here on an encyclopedia and not on an activist blog. Your wacky pov-pushing as pseudo-scientists will not pass, nor will your so-called scientific publications. We've already been hit with fake review boards, fake science sites and fake universities (including the rented lounge on an American

campus). (...) And I repeat what I said elsewhere: there is no need to argue with a pov-pusher who only registered here to force his personal whims. Especially when, as in your case, it resorts to source manipulation (see the case of the previous article). All your interventions are biased. Conclusion: it is impossible to "rectify" or "nuance" behind you. The only solution is to revert systematically, impatiently awaiting the moment when you will give up coming to pollute this encyclopedia.

Accusations that others have not really read the articles they criticise occur again here, as in many other cases. For Addacat, the conflict cannot be resolved by compromise; it is only possible to delete the opponents' statements and wait for them to give up.

Finally, the verbal conflicts were finally managed by partitioning opposing views within a *single sociotechnical space*, that of text production, that was partitioned, following a proposal by Turb, to create *separate sections* in the text, for the scientific and religious views. Thus, a new section was created, entitled "The position of the Catholic church":

Turb: Scientific studies. Uh, the various theories. And the position of the Catholic Church. So the idea was to separate the positions of the Catholic Church on the subject because it has its own position. And it's easy to put it forward because well, that's what the... the religious declare and so on ...

5. Concluding discussion

In this article we presented research on disagreement management in controversial Wikipedia articles with their attendant discussions, using a mixed-methods approach, combining interviews with key WP participants and analyses of the discussions to which they refer. This has enabled us to develop a "thick description" (Geertz 1973) of the processes by which verbal conflicts unfold and are managed across socio-technical and dialogical spaces. As mentioned in introduction, the results obtained here using a case-study method, combined with first-person moderator discourses, do not enable direct generalisation beyond these cases. Rather, such in-depth analyses can shed light on existing research on this topic and enable elaboration of hypotheses to be tested on a larger corpus.

We firstly discuss the main results on disagreement management, then relations between the results and areas of argumentation theory.

5.1 Disagreement management in Wikipedia

Wikipedia is an online epistemic community that provides a highly developed infrastructure for collaborative writing and debate. The infrastructure includes conflict arbitration procedures, nominated administrators, seasoned "wikipedians" who take on the roles of moderators and, perhaps above all, a set of rules for collectively written texts, such as the famous "NPOV", Neutrality of Point of View rule. This turns crucially on the principles of fair representation of all significant views on a topic, and the appeal to reliable sources.

The Wikipedia community therefore has a strong underlying ideology, that intervenes in disagreement management, based not only on the principle of "openness" to participation of all, but also on fairness, good faith and what might be termed a positivistic scientific epistemology, whereby claims must be supported by evidence derived by scientifically valid methods. However, Wikipedia articles *are* frequently subjects of intense debates that, as we have seen, can not necessarily be resolved by moderators requiring participants to cite sources in the belief that conflicts will thereby melt away, and this despite the WP infrastructure of rules and roles.

The ideological battles that we have seen above, in the cases of pages on Freud and on the Turin Shroud, relate to what is at *stake* for participants. Such participants are not only isolated individuals, but also include “offline” social groups (such as religious groups, Freudian societies, or groups of patients in the case of citizen medicine), who sometimes intervene *en masse*, in an attempt to push their points of view and drown out others. In other cases, discussion is dominated by particular “conflicting pairs”, who may even follow each other across pages on related topics. Participants also accuse others of being irrational and ideological, even in the case of scientific viewpoints, whose critiques can be accused of having underlying anticlerical or antisemitic motivations. Since WP is the most consulted publicly available source of information on a global scale, adherents of certain viewpoints or ideologies see too much at stake for them, should Wikipedia texts explicitly refute or denigrate their viewpoints. This might contribute to explaining the extreme tenacity of participants in certain disputes, and also the prevalence of personal attacks.

It seems clear, therefore, that the Wikipedia ideology of “citing sources”, although applicable to factual issues (such as the date of birth of Freud), is not realistic with respect to socio-scientific controversies, involving entrenched ideologies and value systems. Sources in fact, in certain cases (see the discussion of Freud, above), become not only major objects of debate, but also become the ‘voices’ through which argumentation takes place, in what we termed a “dialogical space”. In the case of the Turin Shroud, we also saw migration of the object of dispute from the validity of sources, to the competences of authors, the repute of publishers and the good or bad faith of the participants who proposed them. In the two cases discussed above, we saw a variety of types of arguments put forward in disagreement management: (un)scientificity, ethics (a critique is motivated by antisemitism, anticlericalism), authority (a book won a prize from a scientific organisation), ethos (the other has not read the book (s)he criticises), and personal attack.

From the two cases discussed here, it appears that such deeply entrenched disagreements cannot be actually *resolved* in Wikipedia — and in fact moderators repeatedly state that this is not the role of Wikipedia, which should simply record the existence of important divergent views. One participant (Addacat) even explicitly stated that nothing could be done concerning the religious partisans’ views, other than to delete them and wait for the opponents to give up. It is here that we see the role of the multiple socio-technical spaces of Wikipedia in disagreement management — partitioning a single text space with sections for each opposing view, or shifting the dispute out of the text and discussion spaces themselves.

The study of the Wikipedia online community therefore contributes to applied argumentation studies in providing a case that comprises phenomena that extend a vision of argumentative situations based on confrontations between determinate protagonists in determinate spaces. An innovation of this research is the extension of the concept of “places” within and across which disagreements may be managed, to that of “spaces” (*pace* Aakhus and Lewiński, 2017), both socio-technical (within a given online epistemic community) and also ideational or dialogical. This opens up *hic et nunc* places for argumentation to spaces in the wider social world.

5.2 Relations to areas of argumentation theory

Finally, we discuss how results of the analyses presented in this paper relate to several major issues addressed in argumentation theory: conflict and argumentation, trust, expertise and whether it is always reasonable to represent both sides of an argument.

Firstly, our focus on verbal conflicts and disagreement requires comment, given that several researchers (e.g. Doury 2012; Aikin and Casey 2022a) have argued forcefully that conflicts of opinion and the aims of persuading or convincing are not strictly necessary to the definition of argumentation as an activity. In fact, people can and do argue — in the sense of attempting to “secure a doxastic state with respect to some p ” (Aikin and Casey *ibid.*, p. 134) — even in situations where they already agree (perhaps in order to deepen shared knowledge of a question discussed), as well as in cases where they have no hope of persuading the other (perhaps they simply want to show that their own views are at least defensible). Moreover, it is not even clear that argumentation has determinate functions, when considered in abstraction from social context (Goodwin, 2007). Our choice of focusing on argumentation in situations of verbal conflict was motivated by the fact that Wikipedia is an online epistemic community, whose *raison d'être* is the collective writing and delivery of (valid) knowledge objects, texts. Research in the psychology of education over the past decades has brought to light the processes by which certain types of collaborative argumentation, produced in situations of verbal conflict, can lead to the elaboration of new understanding and knowledge (see e.g. Muller Mirza and Perret-Clermont 2009; Schwarz and Baker 2017, for syntheses). The working conjecture was therefore that verbal conflict situations in Wikipedia could be similarly constructive in an epistemic sense. Our analyses here do not generally confirm that conjecture, in the case of religion *versus* science and ‘hard’ *versus* ‘soft’ science disagreements. This is basically because, broadly speaking, the argumentative interactions in this case are not *collaborative*, in the sense of involving a collective search for ‘the truth’ of the matter without strong personal commitments to one side or another. Rather, they correspond to adversarial argumentation with few holds barred. There are some exceptions, however, such as the case in the Turin Shroud debates, where agreement was reached concerning definitions in a sub-debate: the claim that supporters of the shroud’s authenticity were Catholic fundamentalists needed to be refined (cf. Naess 1966; Baker et al. 2020), since the term “Catholics” does not correspond to a unified category, and believers of other religions or agnostics also support authenticity. It may well be the case — to be confirmed by further research — that such epistemic constructive processes depend on the nature of the questions debated, and are associated principally with more irenic contexts.

Secondly, our results are of import for the question as to whether Wikipedia articles can be trusted as epistemic sources. Goodwin (2010) discusses and rejects three initial possible reasons for trusting Wikipedia: (1) expert authority of authors, (2) collective wisdom emerging from multiple authors, and (3) our inductive experience of reliability. With respect to the first possibility, Goodwin concludes that it will not work when applied to Wikipedia, given difficulties of identifying who is responsible for a given contribution (for example, anonymous participation is possible, even without a username, hence a simple IP address), and assessing their purported expertise. In the debate on the Turin Shroud we saw several cases of claims that certain participants (in the “religious” camp) were “pseudoexperts” (Fuhrer et al. 2021), in the sense of those who do have expertise in one domain (such as history of religions, validated by a PhD), but who then try to extend this to domains where they are not in fact experts (such as carbon-14

dating). The question of the expertise of Wikipedia contributors nevertheless requires some degree of nuance, since in some cases it is possible to check degrees of expertise on personal pages, that link to professional institutions. Nevertheless, claimed expertise is a major topic of explicit debate in controversial pages. The results obtained here are of import for the second possibility mentioned by Goodwin, that the “wisdom of the crowd” would ensure trustworthiness. Our results concord with Goodwin’s scepticism here, given the numerous cases of personal attack and abusive use of sources, sometimes invented for the purpose of defending the (or “a”) “religious” view on the Turin Shroud. In a similar manner, our two case studies do not support the idea that a Wikipedia article should be trusted since the online encyclopædia was trustworthy previously, given that the nature of disagreement management here is not solely oriented towards providing valid epistemic support. Finally, Goodwin proposes a pragmatic criterion for trusting Wikipedia, relating to the existence of intense activity in Wikipedia driven by people who are deeply committed to improving its quality, together with the extensive infrastructure of rules and checks for reasonableness and neutrality of point of view (e.g. blocking repeated text reverts). The results of our analyses support this proposal, notably given the deep commitment of Wikipedia moderators described above, to blocking “POV (Point of View) Pushers” and tenaciously requiring proposed text additions to be motivated according to Wikipedia rules.

Finally, the normative question arises as to whether it is valid to even debate both sides of certain issues, such as the validity of Freud’s theories and the authenticity of the Turin Shroud, in relation to what Aikin and Casey (2022b) term “bothsiderism”. These authors describe bothsiderism as a fallacy, or rather a meta-argumentative fallacy, since it is a fallacy *about* arguments and debates, rather than a fallacious argument *per se*. The meta-fallacy is to conclude, from the existence of an argumentative disagreement on an issue, that either a compromise, suspension of judgement or else continued discussion is in order. Clearly, certain compromises would be meaningless. To take an example from the debates surrounding the dating of the Turin Shroud, it would be meaningless to propose that, since the scientists propose the year 1200 CE and the religious people 30 CE, then they should split the difference, and agree on the date 585 CE. Similarly, since this is a factual matter, it could be argued that there is no point in discussing it.

The third case of bothsiderism involves considering that continued argumentative discussion is in order when it is not. Not every question (for example, the existence of the Shoah) should in fact be debated, since the answer to it may well have been already decided, for example by *bona fide* historians and multiple eye witnesses. As Aikin and Casey (*ibid.*, p. 256) point out, in such cases “the argument that should be closed is kept open”. And yet there is a paradox here: to refuse to debate can legitimate the other side, just as can accepting to debate with them (Plantin 1996; Aikin and Casey 2022b). In these terms, *should* the Wikipedia contributors have debated the authenticity of the Turin Shroud and the scientific validity of Freud’s theories? Are these cases of the meta-fallacy of bothsiderism? We propose that this depends on the precise nature of the question debated.

To consider the case of the authenticity of the Turin Shroud, the question of the rationality of even debating this question depends on the vision of religion that is adopted: as a type of moral allegory, not to be taken literally, requiring interpretation, or else as involving statements of historical fact (e.g. concerning the creation of the World, the existence of God, the reality of the life and work of Jesus of Nazareth, etc.). If religion (in this case, Catholic Christianity) is seen as

involving texts to be interpreted non-literally, in terms of morality and forms of life, then there would not necessarily be a conflict with science (cf. Gould, 1999). But if, as in this case, the factual matter of dating the creation of an artifact (a linen shroud) is concerned, then there would seem to be a ‘bothsiderist’ fallacy. Why, therefore, do “the religious people” persist in debating the shroud’s authenticity with such a degree of tenacity and, one might say, bad faith? As we mentioned previously (see also the discussion of the functions of argumentation directly above), the supporters of the shroud may well not have the aim of persuading, convincing their adversaries, but might simply aim to enable other believers to continue to do so, by illustrating possible lines of argumentative defense, that indeed seem unending. And yet, in the case of the dating of the shroud, this would fall under the definition of the bothsiderism meta-fallacy.

The question is posed somewhat differently with respect to Freud and contemporary cognitive science, each of which involves alternative epistemologies of science (positivistic or wholistic) and has support from *bona fide* academic institutions and researchers. In this case, there would be no meta-argumentative fallacy. It is perhaps therefore understandable that much of the *pro or contra Freud* debate is situated on other planes than the philosophy of science, concerning politics and ethics (purported antisemitism and homophobia).

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Appendix 1: thread number 58, Freud article « Analyser les théories de Freud à la lumière des découvertes récentes des sciences est tout bonnement un contresens ! »

1.	16/03/2010 9.44 CET	à Léon66	Analyser les théories de Freud à la lumière des découvertes récentes des sciences est tout bonnement un contresens !
2.	16/03/2020 10.15 CET	à Cerhab	et ça: " En neurosciences, il existe des chercheurs qui tentent des rapprochement entre neurosciences et théories freudiennes [F 15]" c'est quoi. Votre partialité vous perdra!
3.	16/03/2010 13.01	à Prosopée	Bonjour, si c'est vrai ou faux, en soit, ne m'intéresse pas, par contre je veux des sources. Le sujet peut être à intégrer mais pas si aucune référence ne vient prouver les assertions. Messieurs, compte-tenu des longues polémiques ci-dessus, je vous recommande de passer pas la PdD systématiquement lorsque vous voulez ajouter un point. Nous en débatterons à chaque fois, par contre munissez-vous de sources précises (pagnations), merci. PS : pour le moment ce point ne peut être intégré à l'article,
4.	09/08/2010 21.13 CEST	à 193.52.107.45	Aux dernières nouvelles la psychologie et les sciences psy sont du domaine des sciences humaines, pas de la théologie, c'est pas parce que Saint Freud n'avait pas les outils dont nous disposons actuellement qu'on n'est pas en droit de le réfuter au regard des avancées modernes. Sinon autant recoller des théories affirmant que la Terre est plate dans les articles d'astronomie... Quand quelque chose est dépassé, il faut le dire, et le souligner, pour éviter de faire apprendre des bêtises aux gens.

Appendix 2: thread number 50, "Elisabeth Roudinesco"

1.	19/11/2008 21.17 CET	à Léon66	est la seule à avoir eu le courage d'attaquer ce "livre" et à y révéler son caractère et fondement. Citations de wiki: Querelle judiciaire. Elisabeth Roudinesco a été poursuivie pour diffamation, ainsi que les éditions Gallimard et Claude Lanzmann, par le Club de l'Horloge, qu'elle accuse d'antisémitisme masqué à la suite d'un article publié dans Les Temps modernes n°627, avril, mai, juin 2004, sous le titre "Le Club de l'Horloge et la psychanalyse. Chronique d'un antisémitisme masqué". Elle en a fait de même pour le brûlot de J. Bénesteau : Mensonges freudiens. À la suite d'une requête simultanée de Bénesteau et du Club de l'Horloge, elle est relaxée par le tribunal correctionnel lors du jugement du 2 juin 2005[1]. Le jugement de première instance est confirmé le 1er mars 2006, par la cour d'Appel de Paris qui déboute le Club de l'Horloge. La Cour de Cassation rejette finalement, le 6 mars 2007, le pourvoi du Club de l'Horloge, jugeant que l'article d'Elisabeth Roudinesco ne comporte pas d'imputations diffamatoires.[2]
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			<p>Principaux témoins en faveur d'Elisabeth Roudinesco : Elisabeth Badinter, Elisabeth de Fontenay, Roland Gori, Fethi Benslama, Jean-Pierre Sueur, Jean-Pierre Vernant, Pierre Vidal-Naquet, Henry Rousso, Pierre Milza."</p> <p>Ceux qui s'érigent en justiciers sur wiki feraient bien d'y réfléchir ! Lorsqu'on traite Freud de menteur, d'escroc, avide d'argent, etc. on colporte des images de triste mémoire. GL du haut de votre grandeur, réfléchissez-y ! Cerhab, vu votre verve, vous trouverez sans doute d'autres causes à défendre ou d'autres moyens pour éteindre votre soif anti-freudienne. Des moyens moins ambigus. Prenez notre génie des alpages van Rillaer, ou Changeux qui se met à s'intéresser à son intérêt pour l'art. Vous avez le prix Nobel Kandell, l'historien des boudoirs, déçu du lacanisme Borch-Jacobson. Vous avez Cottraux qui avec sa multinationale behavioriste répète à qui veut l'entendre que lui seul est détenteur de la science. Vous avez Popper qui a construit sa gloire sur la critique de la psychanalyse qu'il ne connaissait pas. Le philosophe Bouveresse qui, entre deux Gitanes, répète combien Wittgenstein avait tout compris avant son suicide, etc. Tous ces gens n'on - au moins eux - pas été poursuivis... Bonne route ! Et encore une fois, si ce genre de propos [* [63] vous branchent, abonnez-vous</p>
2.	19/11/2008 21.23 CET	à Apokrif	"est la seule à avoir eu le courage d'attaquer ce "livre"" C'est le contraire: c'est elle qui a été attaquée en justice.
3.	19/11/2008 21.27 CET	à Léon66	Bonne précision, je rectifie donc : "la seule qui a eu le courage de défendre des idées éthiques. C'est mieux comme ça ? Et puis, puisqu'on aime les précisions, Borch J. lui même a refusé d'intégrer le fameux auteur dans ses écrits, c'est dire !
4.	20/11/2008 10.20 CET	à Cerhab	La seule qui, quoiqu'elle n'ait manifestement pas lu l'ouvrage de Bénesteau incriminé, a instrumentalisé un malencontreux concours de circonstances pour lyncher cet auteur, bénéficiant par ailleurs d'une complaisance médiatique inepte, et de sicares aux argumentations fallacieuses et douteuses...qui pourraient une de ces jours en être justiciables! Contrairement aux allégations fausses et lassantes de Léon66, aucun juge ne s'est prononcé sur le contenu du livre de Bénesteau, mais ils ont conclu à l'absence d'imputations diffamatoires des propos de Roudinesco à l'encontre de Bénesteau! D'autre part, sur quels motifs, autres qu'un procès d'intention partial, se fonde Léon66 pour affirmer péremptoirement mais gratuitement que le portrait de Freud, documenté et sourcé, constitue une attaque antisémite et non une illustration de la psychologie singulière du personnage!? Un peu de sérieux! Pour ma part, je conteste la psychanalyse pour des raisons méthodologiques, scientifiques (mon domaine étant en particulier les sciences cognitives)et politiques quand nos psychanalystes médiatiques se font les chantres de la misogynie, de l'homophobie (ce qui, je l'avoue, n'est pas le cas de Roudinesco même si elle défend, par exemple, Lacan qui le fut explicitement).....et d'une morale passéiste!
5.	20/11/2008 10.48 CET	à Ouicoude	Très clairement, ce n'est à aucun de nous de décider si les propos de Benesteau sont ou non antisémites, de même que son analyse de Freud. En revanche, si des auteurs l'ont dit et publié, rien ne nous empêche de dire "X y a vu des propos antisémites"(source). Sinon, on doit s'abstenir de ce genre d'insinuation. Et pourquoi pas une page sur Benesteau, ce qui ferait des vacances à Freud?

6.	20/11/2008 11.03 CET	à cerhab	C'est une possibilité en effet. Mais: 1. moi qui ai lu in extenso cet ouvrage, je réfute l'existence de propos antisémites, et je ne vois pas pourquoi ma lecture serait moins fondée que d'autres, 2. la question n'est pas exactement celle que vous soulevez, car il s'agit sous ce prétexte d'antisémitisme de censurer toute référence à cet ouvrage, 3. je ne sache pas que l'éditeur ait retiré l'ouvrage de la vente et 4. le livre de Bénesteau a reçu: LE PRIX DE LA SOCIETE FRANCAISE D'HISTOIRE DE LA MEDECINE EN 2003 (la dite société avait attribué un même prix à Roudinesco auparavant!!!)... supposez-vous que cette institution est antisémite, anti-freudienne ou je ne sais quoi?
7.	20/11/2008 13.00 CET	à GL	Oui enfin bon, Léon66, avec son style inimitable, affirme tout aussi fortement que ce bouquin n'est qu'un brûlot antisémite. C'est pourquoi il vaut mieux s'en tenir aux comptes-rendus publiés plutôt qu'aux opinions de contributeurs.
8.	27/11/2008 17.31 CET	à Léon66	Vous je vous ai vu venir. Un inactif esseulé qui a trouvé dans le sport anti freudien une raison d'exister. En général, ça se calme, un conseil jeune homme, lisez d'abord bien ce dont vou parlez et revenez nous raconter le tout... après ! Bonne lecture !
9.	2/12/2008 à 12.41 CET	cerhab	Je ne répondrai pas à ces grotesques déductions (entre projection et "wishful thinking") témoins d'un ressentiment profond et tenace, d'une consternante inculture et d'une affligeante mauvaise foi!
10.	4/12/2008 à 12.19 CET	Léon66	Et que ça ne vous empêche pas de laisser la référence incriminée. Si celà suffit à la joie de tous: le benêt y est, alors je vous laisse à vos plaisirs ! Il y en a qui s'amusent là ou d'autre s'emm... (on trouve aussi ça dans les théories sexuelle infantiles !) Bien le bonjour....
11.	4/12/2008 à 13.41 CET	Cerhab	C'est pathétiquement risible! Votre insignifiance hargneuse et inculte ne mérite finalement qu'indifférence.--Cerhab (d) 4 décembre 2008 à 13:41 (CET)
12.	4.12.2008 à 13.45 CET	Moumine	Je me demande ce que Freud et/ou ses détracteurs penseraient des Wikipédiens en lisant cette page...
13.	4/12/2008 à 14.20 CET	cerhab	Je vous concède que ces admonestations ne présentent au fond pas grand intérêt. Notez cependant qu'elles montrent qu'un individu comme Léon66 pourrait mener impunément une entreprise de désinformation mensongère et de censure me semble-t-il contraire aux aspirations et à l'éthique de Wikipedia. D'autres ont bénéficié de moins d'indulgence, avant d'être exclus pour vandalisme ce que manifestement pratique Léon66. Le problème se situe là
14.	7/12/2008 à 10.53 CET	Léon66	Le problème c'est que wiki, come dans tout système démocratique, laisse passer toute sorte de propos révisonnistes (au sens d'Adorno) et d'obsédés de l'anti-anti-anti sans aucune autre but que de raturer le travail des autres. Dont ceux qui ont été mis à l'écart de wiki ils ont tenus de propos en dehors des limites. Prenez-en bonne note Monsieur Crhab... A bon entendeur..
15.	7/12/2008 à 23.18 CET	CErhab	Libre à m'ineffable censeur Léon66 de pratiquer son esbrouffe verbale habituelle, de qualifier de "révisionniste" l'objectivité historique et scientifique qu'il n'a de cesse de bafouer, et de tenir des propos diffamatoires...mais là attention à ne pas trop dépasser les bornes! Je m'étonne qu'aucun administrateur ou participant ailleurs si prompt à juguler les débordements ne soit encore intervenu! Deux poids, deux mesures?
16.	8/12/2008 à 01.23 CET	ouicoude	Non, je n'interviens plus (puisque c'est pour moi). Vous entretenez tous les deux le conflit avec dynamisme, sur un point tout à fait

			annexe, je vous ai déjà dit que vous débordiez... J'espère juste que l'un des deux - un peu plus mature que l'autre - pourra accepter de ne pas avoir le dernier (gros) mot
17.	20/12/2008 19.47 CET	à cerhab	D'accord pour mettre un terme... plus empreint de sagesse ...à cette escalade verbale. Mais, de mon point de vue, tout le problème reste ouvert et paraît loin d'être annexe.

Appendix 3, thread "Who are the partisans of the shroud?" (article on the Turin Shroud)

1.	03/03/2009 à 9.52 CET	Michel 1961	je pense que , pour éclairer le lecteur, un paragraphe exclusivement consacré à "qui sont les partisans du suaire" et "que veulent t'ils démontrer" serait utile; J'avais , il fut un temps démarrer un paragraphe de ce type qui par la suite fut progressivement démolit car manifestement il gênait. On y apprenait que , soit il s'agit de personnes très liées à l'extreme droite et/ou les intégristes chrétiens protestants ou catholiques, luttant contre , je cite "un complot judéo maçonnique" soit des rêveurs ! l'info de kirtap montrant qu'un des auteurs les plus célèbre pro suaire est aussi pro roswell, je ne la connaissais pas (merci kirtap!) , elle en dit effectivement long et doit etre mise dans l'article.
2.	03/03/2009 à 11.43 CET	michel 1961	Autre point pour éclairer le lecteur à mettre , une fois bien sourcé, dans l'article : les partisans du suaire en europe et aux etats unis, n'ont depuis quelques années, plus grand chose à se mettre sous la dent, en effet la polémique entre scientifiques est close et ces derniers se battent encore sur la précision de la date qui tourne autour 1300 à quelques dizaines d'années près. donc les memes partisans cherchent d'autres "complots judéo maçonniques". le "11 septembre 2001" est un sujet relai de rêve. aussi ces memes partisans ont crée de nouvelles associations dont le credo est "pourquoi 5 israéliens ont été interrogés puis relachés dans le cadre des enquetes sur le 11 septembre ? " édifiant non ?
3.	03/03/2009 à 13.00 CET	Topio	Haaretz n'est pas une source fiable pour Michel1961 ! Edifiant non ? Détestable oui. http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNo=75266&contrassID=2&subContrassID=1&sbSubContrassID=0&listSrc=Y .
4.	03/03/2009 à 13.14 CET	Addacat	Qu'est-ce qui est "détestable" ?
5.	03/03/2009 à 13.49 CET	topio	faire un amalgame entre les scientifiques laissant la porte ouverte à une origine très ancienne du Suaire, la contestation citoyenne de la version officielle des attentats du 11 septembre 2001 et l'antisémitisme. Bref, jeter l'anathème sur les personnes qui ne pensent pas comme vous
6.	03/03/2009 à 14.03 CET	Addacat	Par exemple en nous accusant de « censurer » et d'être des « inquisiteurs » ?
7.	03/03/2009 à 14.13 CET	Perky	Heu, il s'agit peut être d'un style inquisitoriale ;-) Je viens à la défense de Topio, qui en outre, ne dit pas nous. Mais pose une question.
8.	03/03/2009 à 14.23 CET	addacat	Mogador et les autres contributeurs (Kirtap, Michel1961 ou moi, entre autres) auraient-ils donc « un style inquisitoriale » (sic) ?
9.	03/03/2009 à 14.36 CET	Dauphiné	Michel1961, fais gaffe à ce que tu écris. "Les partisans du suaire" ne forme pas une catégorie homogène et même descriptible : ce sont des millions de catholiques dispersés à travers le monde, de toutes opinions politiques, comprenant son lot de croyants par principe, de croyants par obéissance, de croyants par naïveté, de croyants convaincus par les

			arguments qu'ils ont lu, de croyants par habitude, etc. Dire que ce sont pour la plupart des intégristes qui se sont rabattus sur la théorie du complot au sujet du 11/09 est caricatural et infondé (a-t-on établi un lien statistique par enquête d'opinion ?).
10.	03/03/2009 à 14.56 CET	addacat	Des millions, je ne sais pas, faute d'enquête sur ce sujet dans le monde catholique. L'Église précise bien que la croyance en l'authenticité du suaire n'est pas un article de foi et n'a jamais contredit les résultats donnant le XVe siècle, ce qui laisse à chacun la liberté de choix. Autant que je puisse en juger d'après les (nombreux) catholiques que je connais, la croyance en l'authenticité du suaire est extrêmement marginale. De fait, quand KTO a diffusé une émission concluant à l'inauthenticité du suaire, cette chaîne ô combien catholique a reçu des insultes et des menaces provenant des milieux ultra-intégristes. Et l'on peut rappeler à ce propos la position de la CRC, pour laquelle la non-croyance au suaire est l'œuvre du complot maçonnique, tout comme l'incendie du Dôme de Turin. La CRC est d'ailleurs l'une des « sources » que voulait imposer Rocla. Cela ne veut pas dire, naturellement, que tout catholique qui croit au suaire appartienne à la CRC ou équivalent. On peut toutefois noter que l'Église institutionnelle n'apparaît jamais dans les sites et brochures authentistes
11.	03/03/2009 à 15.08 CET	Perky	Le style, c'est ça : les sites et brochures authentistes. C'est donc une secte ? En passant Rocla (d · c · b) est bloqué pour trois jours.
12.	03/03/2009 à 15.44 CET	addacat	... blocage qui ne l'empêche nullement de continuer gaiement à dénigrer Kirtap
13.	03/03/2009 à 15.22 CET	Michel 1961	Réponse à Dauphiné : Tu as raison, tant que ce que j'annonce n'est pas sourcé parfaitement, il faut le laisser en page de discussion, je pense qu'ensuite il faudrait l'introduire dans l'article et pour cela j'aimerais que tu participes à ce sourçage et que tu te fasses ta propre opinion. j'ajoute un point précis : pour moi les "partisans du suaire" que je stigmatise ne sont pas les millions de catholiques qui lisent les documents authentistes et qui , bien sur , peuvent y croire et ne sont pas tous extrémistes, mais bien ceux qui écrivent lesdits documents. Comment moi meme, je me suis fais mon opinion? j'ai pris la liste des personnes en france qui interviennent en tant qu'authentistes et je les ai "googolisés", membres du Comité directeur du Cielt, intervenant dans les émissions style "C dans l'air" , auteurs de livres. Et bien , à ce jour, TOUS , font partis de ces mouvances extrémistes et/ou intégristes. Je te laisse Dauphiné, le soin de le contre vérifier . Cordialement
14.	03/03/2009 à 15.30 CET	addacat	Procédant aux mêmes vérifications, j'en suis arrivée aux mêmes conclusions que Michel à propos des sites et brochures "authentistes" : ce n'est jamais ni l'Église qui s'y exprime, ni aucun historien reconnu. En parallèle, on peut lire cette étude d'un théologien dominicain qui se réfère d'ailleurs à Dubarle et à Ulysse Chevalier.
15.	03/03/2009 à 16.28 CET	Michel 1961	Addacat, ton lien vers CRC tombe dans le vide, tu peux préciser ?
16.	03/03/2009 à 16.40 CET	addacat	Suffit de demander Clin d'œil. Le revoilà, mais sans passer par la page d'homonymie. Le dernier paragraphe de l'article, en particulier, est intéressant.
17.	03/03/2009 à 16.46 CET	Perky	Mais que viens faire Georges dans cette galère ? (je rigole) Mais, ça fait un peu sitcom.
18.	03/03/2009 à 17.07 CET	dauphiné	Réponse à Michel1961 : Dans notre expression il faut donc bien distinguer entre ceux qui croient en l'authenticité et ceux qui font une promotion active de l'authenticité. a) Et encore, parmi ceux qui en font

			la promotion, il y a certainement des intégristes (je fais onfiance dans tes recherches), mais il n'y a certainement pas que celà. Il me semble avoir lu il y a qqes années des ouvrages très modérés qui étaient plutôt partisans de l'idée d'authenticité. b) Parmi les cathos "de base" qui croient, il sont certainement bien plus nombreux hors de France (patrie du doute méthodique) que dans d'autres pays catholiques (je connais des Italiens, des Polonais et des Guinéens, par exemple, qui, sans être extrémistes à ma connaissance, croient en l'authenticité. Je ne connais pas leur opinion sur le 11/09 mais je ne croient pas qu'ils ont des idées bizarre là-dessus). Et au total, oui, ils sont bien des millions. Ne serait-ce qu'en Italie : souvenez-vous (pardon, le point des millions, c'était Addacat ;-)) des réactions après le "sauvetage" du suaire par un pompier italien, il y qqes années).
19.	03/03/2009 à 18.01 CET	Michel 1961	je te propose dauphiné que tu commences à rédiger le paragraphe "partisans du suaire" avec tes 2 sous parties a et b, cela me paraît excellent et rationnel (nombreuses années de philo derrière toi semble t'il?) point b : 100 % d'accord avec Toi, point a : je rajouterai ce que je sais de tous les "extrémistes", et de tous les "reveurs" comme bollone. Il y a t'il des "autres catégories " dans le point a , l'avenir de l'article nous le dira !
20.	03/03/2009 à 18.57 CET	dauphiné	Désolé de te paraître un peu lâche, mais je n'ai pas encore assez d'élément précis pour rédiger sur un sujet aussi sensible. Je préférerais avoir des sources. Et je n'arrive même plus à me souvenir des auteurs modérés que j'évoque. Mais je suis prêt à t'aider si je trouve.
21.	05/03/2009 à 11.57 CET	Michel 1961	effectivement, je me rappelle d'une époque ou il y avait des "auteurs modérés" , au debut du sturp , par exemple, mais depuis que la polémique est close entre scientifique, ces auteurs se sont tous alignés sur la thèse du moyen age, Reste les autres....
22.	05/03/2009 à 11.57 CET	Michel 1961	De mon coté j'ai toutes les sources disponibles et j'avais commencé à les exposer ici, il ya 2 ans mais les authentistes" sont beaucoup plus acharnés que moi et ont fini par me lasser, depuis, tous ce que j'avais écrit a été effacé. je ne recommencerais plus ce travail inutile sans un appui fort de nombreux contributeurs, Heureusement qu'Addacat lutte encore! pour te donner encore un exemple des discussions impossibles de nos jours avec les authentistes modérés : j'avais commencé un échange épistolaire extrêmement courtois d'ailleurs, avec une " des authentistes les plus modérée" se disant scientifique spécialiste du carbone 14. notre échange commença par une critique de la datation C14 de 1988, mais elle m'a vite dit que cette datation moyenâgeuse du suaire était aussi fausse que toutes les datations C14 en effet l'univers a été crée par dieu il y a 5 000 ans et donc : suaire du moyen âge, Darwin, l'homme descend du singe et les dinosaures, tout cela c'est à mettre dans le même panier! (sur ce dernier point je suis d'accord avec elle : tout cela est dans le panier... de la vérité !) donc quand on est en tel divergence de vue, le dialogue n'est jamais constructif
23.	05/03/2009 à 12.43 CET	Dauphiné	Je comprends effectivement ton problème Mort de rire. Celà dit, l'argument sur la création de l'univers, s'il a été publié qquepart, mérite de figurer dans l'article: c'est trop beau ! Sur l'existence d'une section concernant les militants pro-suaire, je pense qu'on peut effectivement écrire qqeue chose de sourcé et d'objectif, mais l'existence d'un tel passage sans sa symétrique (sur les militants anti-suaire) peut poser un problème de POV. Il y a autant d'arrière-pensées chez le militant pro-suaire moyen (cathos très militants, intégristes) que chez le militant anti-

			suaire moyen (pas sans arrière-pensée anticléricales). Il faudrait donc l'existence de ces deux sections, relativement équilibrées dans leur longueur. Ces deux sections pourraient d'ailleurs être mises l'une à côté de l'autre pour montrer que le débat peut certes être traité de manière scientifique, mais qu'il possède également une lourde charge idéologique
24.	05/03/2009 à 16.01 CET	michel 1961	tu as raison ,il faut mettre une section sur les "non authentistes" cela montre effectivement la charge idéologique du débat qui reste la seule depuis la fin de la polémique scientifique ; dans ce groupe il serait intéressant de voir qu'il y a toute la communauté scientifique du C14 . leur vision de la chose a évolué et est tres interessante, ils ont d'abord été pro authenticité (peut etre un peu par interet : si le suaire avait été le vrai , la publicité pour le découvreur et les techniques du C14 auraient été immense, puis ensuite ils sont devenus surtout "anti authentistes" lassés de se faire traiter d'incompétent puis rapidement de tricheurs à la solde de "la grande conspiration mondiale" et cela souvent en déformant leur propos et leur écrits de façon grossière commes ceux du professeur Tite dans les livres d'upinsky . Donc tout ce travail reste à faire, mais, comme je l'ai déjà dit "j'ai déjà donné" alors je ne serais que suiveur et non leader
25.	05/03/2009 à 16.39 CET	dauphiné	Ce que tu dis mériterait pourtant (sourcé) de figurer dans l'article ! Le problème, c'est que je ne tiens pas non plus à être leader sur le sujet, à commencer par le fait que je m'y connais bien moins que les spécialistes de l'article (dont toi), que je n'ai pas de sources, que je suis bien plus à l'aise sur les sujets politiques ou éco... et que, si j'aime bien les sujets épineux, je suis réticent à m'engager dans des discussions à n'en plus finir (j'ai déjà donné sur d'autres sujets ; celà demande une mobilisation et un suivi dont je ne me sens plus capable). Je peux donc aider pour neutraliser mais moins, sur ce sujet là, pour rédiger. C'est dommage que tu n'ai pas gardé dans un coin de ton ordi ou sur une page perso le texte que tu avais rédigé...
26.	05/03/2009 à 16.59 CET	kirtap	Il y a toujours une trace dans l'historique et puis il y a aussi l'article Controverses sur la datation du suaire de Turin par le carbone 14
27.	05/03/2009 à 17.02 CET	addacat	Tout à fait : dans l'histo, voir la ou les versions de fin mai 2008, celle(s) dont je suggère fortement le retour - sous réserve qu'on enlève les TI rajoutés sur le Mandylion, etc. Quant à l'article "Controverses", il a été lui aussi dé-neutralisé depuis l'été 2008 et mériterait un examen attentif. Mêmes causes, mêmes effets. Benford-Marino et alii.
28.	07/03/2009 à 11.13 CET	rocla	"Je viens à peine de voir qu'une phrase a été ajoutée dans l'intro. : ""Pour une partie des catholiques, le drap serait une relique, le Saint-Suaire, linceul ayant recouvert Jésus de Nazareth lorsqu'il fut mis au tombeau : son image se serait imprimée miraculeusement sur les fibres. Pour la plupart, Il s'agit d'une contrefaçon médiévale ou de l'œuvre d'un artiste réalisée à des fins de dévotion ou de tromperie."" Ce genre d'assertions non sourcées a été combattu en son temps par Addacat (cf.ici) qui semble aujourd'hui s'en accomoder. Cette phrase accumule les sous-entendus et les imprécisions. ""Pour une partie des catholiques[...].Pour la plupart"" Cette phrase s'intéresse aux seuls catholiques (on se demande pourquoi et sur quelles bases), suggère fortement que seuls des catholiques sont ""favorables"" au linceul (plus c'est gros, plus ça passe), mais que (rassurez-vous braves

			<p>gens) pour la plupart (la plupart... des catholiques ?) c'est un faux médiéval. Tout cela sans aucune source.</p> <p>Je me permets de dire qu'en France, la personnalité la plus célèbre qui a pris parti en faveur de l'authenticité du linceul est un agnostique revendiqué : Didier van Cauwelaert, qu'André Marion est agnostique, etc. Par ailleurs pour que wiki ne soit pas franco-centré, il faut ajouter que Barrie Schwartz, Adler, Danin, Baruch, scientifiques clairement favorables à l'authenticité, sont juifs, et qu'il y a bien sûr un grand nombre de protestants qui sont sur la même ligne. Enfin il faut ajouter une donnée : quelques scientifiques du STURP se sont convertis au catholicisme après avoir passé de longues heures à étudier l'objet en question.</p> <p>Dès lors on conçoit l'absurdité du reste de la phrase ""son image se serait miraculeusement imprimée sur les fibres"" : l'hypothèse ""principale"" aujourd'hui est celle de Rogers qui propose une solution scientifique expliquant non pas en totalité mais en assez grande partie le phénomène par des lois naturelles.</p> <p>Mon avis : revenir à l'ancienne version, personne ne s'en était plaint."</p>
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